

# WASHINGTON SENTINEL.

VOL. XXVI.

WASHINGTON CITY, D. C., SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 1898

NO. 1

Washington Sentinel,

Published and Edited by

LOUIS SCHADE.

APPEARS EVERY SATURDAY.

## TERMS

\$3.00 per year for single copy sent by mail to subscribers, payable in advance.

## RATES OF ADVERTISING:

First insertion, one inch, \$1.50; second insertion, 75 cents. Liberal deductions made for annual advertisements. Special notices 25 cents a line.

Advertisements to insure insertion should be handed in not later than 12 o'clock noon on Thursday.

Office: No. 804 E Street, N. W. Washington, D. C.

Sample copies mailed upon application. Address LOUIS SCHADE, Washington, D. C.

## WERE THERE "SPANIARDS" IN THE LATE CIVIL WAR?

### Sad Reminiscences.

The refusal of the Spanish to exchange Hobson and other American prisoners in their hands, is only an imitation of the doings of the Federal Government during the Civil war. They refused to exchange their own prisoners in the South, because provisions there being scarce, those prisoners would, as co-consumers of the little stock, sooner bring on the collapse of the Confederacy, just as the Spaniards now use Hobson for defensive military purposes to prevent their firing on Morro Castle.

When the war broke out the Confederates made more prisoners than the North. The consequence was that on the exchange lists the Confederates had at a certain time a large surplus in the number of prisoners by them sent back without an equivalent. When later on the Northerners made more prisoners than the South they would not recognize the surplus of the Confederates. The latter were finally compelled to yield their surplus and offer to exchange man for man. That was refused by the North for military reasons, as a retention in captivity of Northern men would weaken the Confederates.

The latter, not having medicines and other necessities to turnish to the Union prisoners whom the North did not want to exchange (medicines being declared contraband of war by the Christian Stanton Government) offered to relieve the misery of the Northern prisoners by buying of the Union Government medicines, etc., for gold, and, in order to make it a sure thing, asked that Federal surgeons be sent South to see that those medicines were given to none but Northern prisoners. This was refused.

So limited became the stock of medicines that Surgeon J. C. Pilot writes, September 6, 1864, from Andersonville (this letter was produced by the Judge Advocate in the Wirz trial):

We have little more than the indigenous bark and roots with which to treat the numerous forms of disease to which our attention is called daily. For the treatment of wounds, ulcers, etc., we have literally nothing, except water. Our wards, some of them, are wild with gangrene, and we are compelled to fold our arms and look quietly upon its ravages, not even having stimulants to support the system under its depressing influence; the article being so limited in supply that it can only be used for cases under the knife.

But the Washington authorities did not want to "exchange skeletons for healthy men."

Finally, when all hope of exchange was gone, the Confederates, in despair at the cruel policy of the Washington Government which sacrificed its own prisoners, and in order to end the misery of thousands of Northern prisoners on hand, whom to help they had not the means, offered early in August, 1864, through Col. Ould, the Confederate commissioner, to deliver up all the Federal sick and wounded, without requiring any equivalent in return, and pledged that the number would amount to ten or fifteen thousand, and if it did not, they would make up that number with well men. Although the offer was made early in August the transportation was not sent for them (to Savannah) until December, although Col. Ould urged and implored (to use his own words) that haste should be made. During that very period the most of the deaths at Andersonville occurred. Nevertheless Mr. Stanton reported to Congress, July 19, 1866, that of Southern prisoners in the North there died 26,436, and of

Northern prisoners in the South, 22,576!

These are facts firmly established in history. It is true the Federal authorities tried by a military commission mock trial, held under the very dome of the Capitol, of a poor, wounded, helpless, paroled Confederate prisoner, Capt. Wirz, to put the odium of all those shortcomings and cruelties upon the Southern people, even trying to subornate the prisoner under the promise on the eve of his execution that, if he would implicate Jeff Davis (then a prisoner at Fortress Monroe) in the alleged atrocities at Andersonville, his sentence would be commuted, but the prisoner spurned the idea of becoming a liar and traitor, and next day mounted the gallows, an innocent man.

The miserable Spaniards, though at the head of any cruel rascality against humanity, do not stand so entirely alone.

### Is Havana Blockaded?

It is interesting and possibly profitable to consider a little the relative values of the widely conflicting testimony concerning the condition of Havana as a blockaded city. There have been many reports that the prices of provisions have risen enormously owing to scarcity and that in many articles supplies were practically exhausted.

The two New York *World* men recently prisoners in Havana did not observe signs of such a condition of things. The correspondent of the London *Times* reports to the contrary, and representatives of two other London newspapers say that supplies are high in price only to those who have nothing but depreciated currency to offer in exchange. A merchant who left Havana two weeks ago asserts that there is a constant movement of supplies into Havana from the Yucatan coast by the way of the Isle of Pines and the coast of Cuba at Batabano, forty miles from Havana. A theatrical troupe, he says, has reached Havana from Mexico by this route since the beginning of the blockade.

On the other hand, the reports of scarcity have nearly all reached us from insurgent sources, and "allies" have good reason to exaggerate the distress in Havana.

Are we really blockading Havana?

### More Spanish Chivalry.

When Cervantes "laughed Spain's chivalry away" he failed to eradicate the cruelty which is a part of the Spanish character, and which even a sham chivalry used sometimes to soften.

Gen. Blanco has shown the basic trait of the Spaniard in his refusal to exchange Lieut. Hobson and his brave comrades. That he has full authority to do so no one will question.

Whether the Spaniards purpose holding Hobson and his men for the fusillade or to use as shields for their rotten fortifications does not appear. Their mere imprisonment in a Cuban dungeon at this time of year would be equivalent to a death sentence.

It would be well for our Government to notify Gen. Bunco or Blanco that if any harm comes to Hobson and his comrades while prisoners of war, six Spanish prisoners in our hands will pay the forfeit for every one of our men murdered in any way. We have stood about enough of Spanish "chivalry."

### Significant Advice.

British Consul F. W. Ramsden, who is looking after American interests in Santiago—as he did, by the way, during the Virginius affair—is said to have suggested that we pay a ransom for Hobson and his companions.

The significance of this advice is that it comes from a man who has seen American prisoners killed by Spanish soldiers in Santiago, and who saved other American prisoners from a like fate only by the threat that if they were shot a British warship in port would bombard the town. But now there is not in Santiago harbor any British warship—nor any American warship.

It is to be noted that the petitioners for peace in Spain who ask, "Where is the honor of pouring out the blood of our soldiers and reducing millions to famine?" are of Catalonia, the one province of that country where industry has not retrograded but progressed during this century. A more widely diffused intelligence all over Spain would have made this war impossible.

### Spain's Last Fleet.

The jack-o'-lantern fleet that left Cadiz last week for an unknown destination no longer excites more than mild curiosity in this country. Time was when the news of the departure of a Spanish fleet, even without a mysterious "new explosive," would have sent a flutter through the hearts of our authorities and led to a hasty revision of American plans. But nobody bothers about such things now. The general indifference on this subject was indicated when Camara's redoubtable squadron turned up at Carthage, where it will probably stay for the summer.

There are only three possible directions in which the Spanish fleet could go if it meant to attack us. It could go to the Philippines, to the West Indies or to the coast of the United States. If it starts for the Philippines it will be heard from at Suez, if not sooner. In that case there will be no occasion for us to give it another thought. Dewey can take care of it even with his present force, and before the Spaniards can get to Manila he will have the Charleston, the Monterey and the Monadnock in addition.

If Camara ventures across the Atlantic he will find that Cervera has been disposed of before his arrival. That will leave Camara to fight alone against our entire naval force in the Atlantic. For him to go to the West Indies would be simple suicide, just as it has proved to be in the case of Cervera. There is left only the American coast. But Cervera's destruction will leave us with such a fleet available for patrolling our shores that before Camara could begin a bombardment at any point he would have to stand a battle. And that would be the end of Senor Camara, and with him of the Spanish navy. As all this is doubtless well understood at Madrid, we may safely assume that Spain's last remaining fleet will stay sedulously at home.

### The Drunken Dons and Their Honor.

The news comes from Manila that Spanish officers go into battle drunk and that "General Augusti is court martialing and shooting them every day." This intelligence is not inherently improbable. Spanish officers who possess any sense know that they are fighting in a lost cause, and this knowledge renders them desperate. Under such circumstances men devoid of dignity of mind and true courage are prone to resort to the course of despairing sailors on a sinking ship, who broach the rum casks in order that they may besot themselves and escape the terrors of consciousness when the moment to die comes.

These drunken cravens in the Philippines are the same gentry that have been smiting their breasts and boasting of their honor—an honor, we have been given to understand, that would welcome death in serenity rather than survive the disgrace of surrender.

We shall begin to believe in that vaunted Spanish honor when some evidence of its existence is supplied. An enemy who will protect himself behind prisoners and refuse to exchange them, an enemy that needs the support of the bottle when going into action, is not an enemy who impresses as being either self respecting, brave or decent. Spain is a worthless nation, and it is not surprising therefore that she should produce worthless officers who stagger when they follow their flag and hiccough when they twirl their mustachios and babble of honor.

### Favoritism in Taxation.

The new revenue law exacts a double tax on "mixed flour." Every maker, packer or repacker of such flour must pay an annual license fee, and, in addition to that, every package of mixed flour must carry a revenue stamp.

Now why? Mixed flour is simply wheat flour with some corn flour added. It is just as wholesome as any other flour, and its manufacture is just as legitimate. It is sold honestly for what it is. Why then should those who make and sell it be subjected to a double fine for doing so?

If the tax is levied for the sake of the revenue it will yield, why should it not be laid equally upon all kinds of flour? Why should a discrimination be made against those who provide cheap and wholesome food products in favor of those who provide more expensive ones? Why should the poor man's flour be taxed and the rich man's flour go free?

The enactment is a bit of unwise and unjust paternalism. It has absolutely no justification. It is

arrant favoritism, specially hurtful to the community because it needlessly discourages perfectly legitimate effort to cheapen the people's bread. It is an outrageous robbery of consumers for the benefit of a particular class of millers.

### No Poor Among Them.

In three countries in Europe the workers are so thrifty and provident that, in spite of the smallness of their earnings, they contrive to provide for their old age as a rule without help from the State or commune. These three countries are Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. By dint of hard toiling the whole day long the people of these lands manage to scrape together enough to keep them from starving when they are old.

In Spain, Portugal and Italy, on the other hand, no one—at least among the working classes—even dreams of taking thought even for the morrow, let alone for old age. To do so, indeed, would be held to imply a lack of faith in the Virgin, whose special function is to take care of the old and helpless. In these regions the people, when too feeble to work, turn to begging as a regular profession, and look to the church—the State does nothing for them—to eke out their means if the public wax stings. Much the same state of things prevails in Russia, where, however, beggars both old and young can always count on a richer harvest than elsewhere; for the Slavs are a superstitious race, and there is a proverb that luck turns its back on the man who refuses to give alms.

### A Double Wrong.

A tabulated statement shows that of 633 commissioned officers appointed to the volunteer army 400 are civilians who received their appointment through political influence.

There is a double wrong in this. It is an injustice to the officers of the regular army, whom the nation has educated at great pains and expense for just such a contingency. If military education and training are of no value we had better shut up West Point.

It is likewise an injury to the army and to the country. To put the lives and health and general welfare of our volunteers at the mercy of untrained and incompetent officers in order that a son of somebody may wear a decoration or the favorite or dependent of a man in civil office may be "provided for," is little short of a crime.

Fortunate indeed will the country be if the incapacity and weakness of our enemy shall prevent the losses and disasters that are the logical result of such a policy.

### Bossed by a Briber.

It is interesting to know that the Ohio Republican Convention held last Tuesday was wholly controlled by the friends of Senator Hanna.

This is the same Hanna who was found guilty by an investigating committee of the Ohio Senate of having secured his election to the United States Senate by bribery.

Hanna did not attend the convention. He was kept in Washington on business—not the business of defending himself from the charges of bribery which have been filed with the Vice President. That affair Hanna will defer to suit his own convenience. He is too busy with profitable matters just now to give thought to clearing himself of a strongly supported charge of bribery.

But at long distance Hanna, the accused briber, controlled wholly the State Convention of Ohio Republicans. It is enough to state the fact to give a new idea of the quality of some Ohio Republicanism.

### The Popularity of Leprosy.

As Gen. Schofield testified before the House committee, there is only one harbor in the Hawaiian islands that can be and is worth fortifying as a naval station. That is Pearl harbor, which is now ours and will remain in our possession as long as we choose to hold it.

Why then annex Hawaii, the remote and leprous? Because some of the officials at Washington wish their friends, Dole and his friends, to get a present of \$4,000,000 from our people. Because others have friends with sugar plantations in the islands. Because others are dreaming of empire and think that that distant leper colony is a natural beginning. The inquiry is likely to be enacted, but not a single vote is or can be influenced by our need of a naval station in the Pacific.

### Election of Senators.

Recall elections and those to be held in November affect 29 seats in the United States, and will determine whether Republicans or the combined opposition are to have control after March 4, 1899. If the Republicans are able only to hold their own in the Senatorial contests this fall, they are assured at present of exactly half of the membership of the Senate. Republican Senators are now 43, two less than a majority, as there are but 89 members of the body, owing to the decreased representation of Oregon. Judge Louis E. McComas, Republican, has already been designated by the Maryland Legislature to succeed Senator Gorman, Democrat.

The result in Oregon makes certain two Senators from that State after March 4, next, both of whom will be Republicans. Ohio elected Senator Hanna last January, to serve for the full term, which begins next March; Virginia has triumphantly re-elected Senator John Warwick Daniel for a third term as a Democrat, to begin in March; Little Rhody last week bestowed a similar honor upon her senior Republican Senator, Nelson Wilmarth Aldrich, who will enter upon his fourth term on the expiration of the present Congress. The 24 other Senatorial seats, which depend upon the issue of the fall elections, are now held as follows:

Republicans—Senators Hawley, of Connecticut; Hale, of Maine; Lodge, of Massachusetts; McPherson, of Michigan; Davis, of Minnesota; Quay, of Pennsylvania; Wilson, of Washington, and Clark, of Wyoming—eight in all. Democrats—Senators White, of California; Gray, of Delaware; Pasco, of Florida; Turpie, of Indiana; Cockrell, of Missouri; Smith, of New Jersey; Murphy, of New York; Roach, of North Dakota; Bate, of Tennessee; Mills, of Tennessee; Faulkner, of West Virginia, and Mitchell, of Wisconsin—twelve in all.

Populist—Senator Allen, of Nebraska. Silver Republicans—Senators Mantle, of Montana, and Cannon, of Utah. Silverites—Senator Stewart, of Nevada.

A numerical analysis would seem to show that the Republicans have decidedly the best prospect of gaining in the strife for these Senatorial seats. Of the eight Republican Senators, six come from rock ribbed Republican States, and there can be doubt that their successors will be Republican.

Wyoming and Washington are States in which hot political battles are to be fought this fall and the character of the State Legislature is entirely a matter of conjecture at this time. While Wyoming has two Republican Senators, her one representative in the House is a Democrat, Mr. John E. Osborne, Vice-President of the Democratic Congressional campaign committee. He had a plurality of 266 votes over Frank W. Mondell, a former Republican representative, but did not have a majority, and 628 votes were cast for the Populist candidate. Those figures are sufficient to show the close reckoning between the two great parties in Wyoming.

In Washington State Senator John L. Wilson, once a clerk in the Pension Office, this city, and just now closing ten years of honorable public service, four years of which have been in the House and almost six years in the Senate, has the fight of his life in prospect. His colleague, Senator George Turner, of Spokane, is a Populist, and was elected by a fusion Legislature, chosen in 1896, when fusionists swept the State by a majority of about 15,000 votes. It is claimed that there can be no fusion in Washington State for this campaign, which, of course, raises Republican hopes. The landslide in Oregon also has encouraged the Republicans not only in Washington but in Wyoming.

It is interesting to know that the Ohio Republican Convention was conducted on financial issues, which have predominated Western politics in recent years.

Four of the twelve Democratic seats that remain to be filled by State Legislatures before next March will certainly continue to have Democratic occupants. Senator Francis Marion Cockrell, of Missouri, is one of the veterans of the upper house, both in the length and usefulness of his service, having first taken his seat March 4, 1875. Since that time he has served continuously. He will undoubtedly be returned. Senator Pasco, of Florida, was unanimously re-elected to a second term in 1893, and will probably receive a similar honor next winter. Senator Mills, of Texas, whose advocacy of the gold standard has estranged him from Texas Democrats, will not be returned, but his successor will be a Democrat, Senator Bate, of Tennessee, has had twelve years in the Senate. There has been some speculation about his being named for re-election, but his successor will certainly be a Democrat.

Indiana, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, West Virginia and Wisconsin, six States that will elect successors to Democratic Senators this fall, are now dominated by Republicans, and have either unanimous or majority representation in the House. New Jersey, North Dakota, West Virginia and Wisconsin have solid Republican delegations to Congress; Indiana and New York send a large majority of Republican Representatives to the present Congress. In both the States last named there will be the most intense struggles of the campaign for party supremacy. The municipal victories of last year in New York State will give the Democrats much encouragement, and the Republicans will contest with equal vigor to retain their Republican Representatives and the Legislature that will elect Senator Murphy's successor.

Senator White, the Chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, has declined to be a candidate for a second term from California. One of the most aggressive and gifted members of the Senate, and strong with his party in California, his withdrawal has probably lessened the chances of a Democrat being his successor. In West Virginia, now looked upon as a Republican State, Commissioner of Internal Revenue Scott is already waging an active canvass for the seat of Senator Faulkner.

The present Silver and Populist representation in the Senate is likely to remain.

## OUR FOREIGN NEWS.

Translated and Selected from leading European papers for the SENTINEL.

### ENGLAND.

A POSSIBLE DANGER IN EASTERN EUROPE.

London Spectator.

It is said that Alexander Obrenovitch, the young King of Serbia, has fallen into a condition of health which causes acute alarm in his family and among his subjects. Indeed, it is asserted, in a way which is unusual when kings are the subjects of diagnosis, that there is no reasonable hope of his permanent recovery. We do not usually notice such statements, more especially when they are peremptorily denied, as this is by the Minister of Serbia, but they remind the world of the forgotten fact that peace really hangs upon the life of that young man. King Alexander of Serbia has no heir, his father Milan being declared to be "impossible," and his death, therefore, would leave the throne of the Serbian kingdom open to any powerful pretender. It is hardly possible that, under such circumstances, Russia and Austria should not support rival candidates, and not very difficult to foresee who they would in all probability be. The Russian Government, always keenly interested in Serbia as being essentially Slav, would put forward Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, whom it has always favored, and now regards almost as a Prince of the Imperial house. He himself makes no secret of his ambition, and it is said, promises the Serbians that if he is elected he will restore the ancient short-lived glory of the Serbian "Empire"—that is, will stretch his dominion over Bosnia and Northern Bulgaria, and seat his kingdom at once on the Black Sea and the Adriatic. The Prince is a man of ability and ambition, he is accustomed to govern, and successful in government, and he can dispose of forces which, if not numerous, are insured to war, and are dreaded throughout the Balkans and in European Turkey for their bravery and their devotion to their chief. As the only crowned Slav except the Emperor of Russia, he would be a most formidable candidate, and would, it is hoped, be most acceptable to the Serbians, who are possessed with the idea that they ought to recover their ancient patrimony, and, above all, to reach the sea. To the Austrian Government, on the other hand, such a candidature would be most unacceptable. The Hapsburgs are always sensitive, and with good reason, about the freedom of the Danube, which a Danilo dynasty seated in Belgrade would be able at will to threaten, and always hope that an extension to Salonica would give their subjects the means of becoming rich through Asiatic trade. With Serbia in the hands of enemies, and Bosnia threatened, that extension would finally be barred. They have no intention of surrendering Bosnia, which they have turned into a flourishing province, or of renouncing their claim to equal influence with their secular rivals in the whole peninsula. They would be almost compelled to occupy Serbia for themselves, as the Serbians fear they will one day do, or to support a candidate of their own, who could only be the King of Roumania, who is the one Prince in Eastern Europe possessing both more capacity for military enterprise and larger resources for war than the Prince of Montenegro, and the only one in whose success the Hapsburgs would feel something more than a "benevolent" interest. Such a rivalry would mean war in the near future even if both empires were bent on peace, and it is by no means certain that they are bent on peace as decidedly as they were a year or two ago.

The present rulers of Russia under the Czar are new men with a great desire to distinguish themselves; and though they have achieved, as they have publicly acknowledged, a brilliant success in the Far East, where they have extended their ice bound empire down to open water, they are not altogether contented with their position. They are anxious to prove to all Eastern Europe that Russia is still the one power to be conciliated, and they perceive that they have just now a singular opportunity.

RECRUITING IN SCOTLAND. Army and Navy Gazette.

The present condition of recruiting in the Highlands offers a lamentable contrast to that of ninety or a hundred years ago. Indeed, in the last half century there has been a marked falling off in the number of Highland recruits. Even as late as twenty years ago it was no uncommon thing to meet with Highland soldiers who "had got no English," while to a large proportion of the men in killed regiments English was an acquired language. Some fifty years ago in one regiment there was a Gaelic speaking squad with Gaelic speaking instructors. In 1864, in the same regiment, though the number of Highland soldiers had greatly diminished, more than nine men out of ten were Scotchmen, while the remaining tenth were or the most part Englishmen or Irishmen who had been brought up in Scotland or came from the north of Ireland, and were of Scottish ancestry. Gradually the supply of Scotchmen, and especially of Highlanders, fell off till even the five old killed regiments were compelled to have free recourse to England and Ireland. To make matters worse, though Scotland could not unaided keep the regiments in question, in addition to supplying large contingents to the lowland regiments, the Scots Guard, the Blues, the Greys and the Royal Artillery, the War Office created no less than four additional killed battalions, and quite recently have given an additional both to the Scots Guards and the Cameron Highlanders. The natural result of this increased demand on a dwindling supply is that even the killed regiments are now largely composed of Irishmen and men from London and

other large cities in England. In short, the so called Highland Regiments are quickly losing their nationality, though fortunately not their esprit de corps. As long as they wear the bonnet that will remain.

It is manifest that the chief cause of the state of things to which we refer is that the recruiting capacities of Scotland are greatly overtaxed. Another cause is the improved condition of trade and the rise of wages. Still, more soldiers ought to be obtained from a race of adventurous men and hereditary warriors were proper steps taken to bring before the inhabitants of the Highlands the advantages of military service. As the result of touring parties from the Cameron and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders through their respective districts, it was found that in many of the out of the way villages more than an occasional and single Highland soldier had never been seen before, and that the country people were quite ignorant of the conditions of military service. The garrison of Scotland consists as regards infantry of but two battalions. Only the other day a strong detachment of the Cameron Highlanders was sent to Elgin to heat up recruits, but only remained in that town a couple of days. What is needed is that an entire battalion should occasionally, with pipes skirling and colors flying, make a leisurely march throughout their regimental district, stopping, say, a couple of days in each town and visiting every village of any size.

As, however, there is frequently but a single killed battalion quartered in Scotland, such a measure would only result in stimulating the recruiting of one, or at the most two, killed regiments, and there are five in existence. It would be desirable, therefore, that the permanent garrison of Scotland should be increased by one killed battalion, which should be quartered either at Fort George or Inverness. The latter would be preferable, but there are no barracks at the capital of the Highlands capable of accommodating a comparatively small sum of money. A comparatively small sum on Fort George would make the fine barracks at that place capable of housing a battalion in addition to the depot of the Seaforth Highlanders. It might also be possible to send annually a battalion of killed troops to the Highlands and islands for a couple of months' tour through its regimental district. If we need recruits, and we do urgently need them, we must not grudge spending money on getting them. The Scotchman is fond of adventure and warfare in his tendencies; the great point, therefore, is to bring the troops, entire battalions, not merely small detachments and isolated recruits, in contact with the population. It is also desirable to press the advantage of the army home to the dwellers in remote districts. A matter of fact these advantages are considerable, but are not thoroughly appreciated. A soldier sees the world, is well clothed and fed, is tenderly cared for in sickness, is well provided with amusements, and has more pocket money than his brother in civil life, besides having openings for a good future on leaving the army. Military service is also now held in higher esteem than formerly, and mothers and ministers of religion are gradually freeing themselves from the old prejudices about the demoralizing influence of the barracks yard. Let, therefore, the common sense and the sentiment of the Scotchmen be appealed to, and the number of Highland recruits will undoubtedly increase.

### TERRIBLE FAMINE IN RUSSIA.

Anglo-Russian.

The news of the wide spread famine in Russia is getting worse, and the picture of the suffering of millions of disinherited peasants is distressing and heartrending in the extreme. The Russian Government has at last been compelled to break its silence, and has issued an official proclamation endeavoring to quiet the general alarm raised in Russian society and in the press. The Government asserts that the private accounts of general starvation, "hunger typhus," and other effects of lack of nourishment, are all exaggerated, and that the facts published in many papers are only "the ordinary appearances of poverty and want to be met with in the existing conditions of life among the agricultural as well as other classes of the population." This apology and admission are characteristic in themselves. What are the facts? The official account admits that nineteen provinces, with a population of about forty millions, are affected by the bad crops of last year. Numerous private, but more authoritative than official, reports from various localities, state that a large number of peasants have been compelled to sell their horses and cows at an average price of four roubles (about eight shillings) per head; that in numerous cottages the hedges and the barns have been burnt through the winter as fuel; and the very thatch from the roofs has been consumed in food for the cattle; that "meals" are taken once a day, the bread consisting more of the bark of trees, leaves, and chaff, than of flour; that diseases have broken out everywhere, as the result of cold and hunger, &c., &c. In many of the provinces the peasants, to save themselves from utter starvation, offer their day's labor with that of their horse for the sum of twenty kopecks—about fourpence, English. The appalling facts the Government calls "ordinary appearances of poverty and want," and attributes them "to existing conditions of life," for which the Government apparently considers itself not in the least responsible. We quite agree that the abject poverty and want of the millions of the Russian people, amounting practically to incessant semi-starvation, are the direct fruit of the cruellest tyranny exercised by the Government over the whole life of the people, and of the numerous official and artificial measures which cut off and bar all ways to improvement and self-help.

We do not remember ever having heard of great distress in Finland, Poland

and in the Baltic provinces. The bulk of the population in those parts being non-Russian by origin, and non-Orthodox by religion, stands generally on a higher level of civilization, and still enjoys remnants of their old social institutions, which help them in an organized manner to combat the elements of nature, mitigate effects of droughts, and generally be prepared to meet any possible calamity. The soil of the provinces now affected by the famine is incomparatively richer and more productive than that of Finland and the Baltic region, but the population, thoroughly Russian, is more ignorant, entirely under the control of the State Church, bearing on its weary shoulders all the terrible weight of a double system which may be truly designated as that of Tsarism and Papacy combined, affiliated, or rather assimilated and absorbed into one another. We saw, therefore, without hesitation, that the Russian Government is responsible, and to be blamed for all calamities which befall Russia, be it famine, epidemics, self-demolishing fanaticism or what not. For it keeps systematically and intentionally the whole nation in a state of childish ignorance and helplessness; it robs the people of its labor and wealth as no other Government in and out of Christendom does, and wastes it on most ruinous and utterly unnecessary and disastrous schemes of military and naval aggression; it shuts up for the people the way to education and light, the only means for attaining welfare and prosperity.

The more we study the whole Russian question, and the more we are longing to help in some way to alleviate the sufferings of the Russian people, the more the conviction forces itself upon us, that nothing could be done, and no efforts and sacrifices will avail, until the uppermost foe is destroyed—the system of absolute autocracy, which is at the root of all evils in Russia, and to a great extent in Europe at large.

### Old Empires Tottering.

The two old Empires of China and Spain, those that have longest stood out against modern civilization, are likely to be reduced to insignificance before the close of the century, says the *Chicago News*. The Chinese Empire began about 2500 B. C., while the first Gothic king of Spain was killed by his soldiers in 411 A. D. Turkey, or the Ottoman Empire, which was founded in 1299, is also in the throes of dissolution, and its existence as a power in Europe can hardly extend far into the next century.

Each of these three great Powers has had all the elements of strength and durability; they have all been rich, prosperous and respected as military States, with capabilities of self-preservation. China ruled the best part of Asia, Spain controlled the principal part of two continents on this side of the Atlantic, and Turkey held Asia Minor and large territorial possessions in Europe.

But from the very inception of their governments have powerful nations war with the progress of civilization upon their subjects, and the United States and Japan, both of which are the products of nineteenth century civilization, and the differences between the two systems are brought strikingly into contrast.

Nations that started out under mediæval civilization and which have kept abreast with human progress hold the chief positions of commercial importance and military power to-day. Spain and Turkey might rank with Great Britain and Germany but for their rigid adherence to the superstitions that founded and still approve of the inquisitions and the slaughter of those of a different religious faith.

Spain, Turkey and China have no place in that better government of the world that it is believed the twentieth century will usher in. The loss of Cuba, the dividing of China and gradual dismemberment of Turkey are parts of a plan of government that is not of man's direction.

### Prohibition Failure in Alaska.

"The whiskey question is giving us more trouble in Alaska than all other evils put together," said Mr. James Leddy, a lawyer of Juneau, at the Shorham.

"Even the most ardent temperance men, and I belong in that class, see the folly of the present system, which, though primarily intended to keep liquor out of the way of the Indians, in reality serves no such purpose, for there can be no prohibition law that cannot be evaded. Men will smuggle in the stuff, and it doesn't matter how many indictments are found against them, they go ahead with violations of the law, because public sentiment recognizes the futility of trying to enforce it. Another bad feature is that officials, whose duty it is to watch violations of the law, 'stand in' with the liquor men, and thus bribery becomes frequent, to the demoralization of the entire country."

"Another practical objection is that while liquor continues to be brought in the Government gets no revenue from the business. On all accounts a high license system would be infinitely better for the Territory, and the sentiment of all our best citizens supports such a policy. If Congress more thoroughly understood the needs of Alaska, we could have a far better Government. At Juneau there are no courts to appeal to and we are compelled to go all the way to Sitka, the capital, for the slightest judicial relief. To get an attachment or injunction requires a trip of 360 miles for lack of a local judge, the United States Commissioner having no more authority than a Justice of the Peace.